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ABSTRACT

The results of an attempt to identify a dropout pattern or profile which could be used to more readily identify at risk youth in Detroit Public Schools are presented in this report. The report is divided into two major sections. Section 1 discusses methodology and analyzes data and findings. Based on personal interviews with Detroit dropouts at the point of leaving school, the data fall into these categories: (1) personal background; (2) family background; (3) home environment; (4) peer group and teacher relationships; (5) reasons for leaving and/or not returning to school; and (6) services or courses which, if provided, could have kept them in school or would encourage their reenrollment. Section 2 summarizes the study findings and provides these recommendations: (1) develop more effective strategies to deal with dropping out caused by pregnancy and fatherhood; (2) make more rigorous efforts to identify and monitor the academic progress of close friends and siblings of dropouts to diminish the "band wagon" effect; (3) study why so many students dropped out because school was "boring" or unappealing; (4) identify and remediate youngsters in the early stages of negative behavioral tendencies; (5) encourage staff to more actively recruit potential candidates for vocational-technical centers; (6) expand child care facilities and programs; (7) explore the feasibility of more flexible programming to meet the self-perceived needs of at-risk students; and (8) establish a program for contacting dropouts within six months of school withdrawal to promote their return. The questionnaire used in student interviews is included as the appendix. (KH)

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THE DETROIT

EARLY SCHOOL LEAVERS PROJECT

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A PROFILE OF DROPOUTS

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Funded Jointly by
Michigan Department of Education
Detroit Board of Education

* *

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Prepared by
Dr. Nicholis Poulos
Evaluation and Testing Department

* * *

Office of Instructional Improvement
Detroit Public Schools
June, 1986

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PART I

ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM

Early school leaving in the nation's public schools has been a major cause for concern for a number of years. Particularly perplexing to educators is that the "dropout" rate has not decreased in two decades and may be rising. Hence the retention power of the schools, notably in many urban areas, appears to be eroding.

Exacerbating the problem, many teenagers have been dropping out of school because of pregnancy. Especially alarming is the increasing rate of pregnancy among very young girls, some of whom were 12 and 13 years old. To a lesser extent but also unsettling is evidence that teen-aged boys have been leaving school because of impending or actual fatherhood.

Concerned with the problem of early school leavers, particularly with those youngsters who leave school prematurely due to pregnancy or fatherhood, the Michigan Department of Education awarded a grant to the Detroit Public Schools for the purpose of determining which services might be provided to alleviate the dropout rate among this population.

A task force comprised of Detroit Public Schools staff members from the departments of school social work, guidance and counseling, attendance, evaluation and testing, program development, and alternative education as well as State Department personnel, was convened to address the problem. It was decided that the initial impetus should be expanded to include all of the school system's dropouts and also that the desired information could be most viably obtained through a city-wide program of personal interviews via use of a survey instrument.

The thrust of the task force was directed toward obtaining from the respondents first-hand, retrospective information at the time of leaving concerning: (1) personal background, (2) family background, (3) home environment, (4) peer

group and teacher relationships, (5) reasons for leaving and/or not returning to school, and (6) services or courses which, if provided, could have kept them in school or would encourage their reenrollment. Other desired information was concerned with the extent of awareness of legal, social, and in-school services available to school leavers for reasons of pregnancy or fatherhood.

It was anticipated that via an analysis of the data and findings, a dropout pattern or profile would be generated which could be used to more readily identify at-risk youngsters so that remediative measures could implemented early on. It was also hoped that the information acquired could be used to strengthen the holding power of the schools as well as to induce the reenrollment of early school leavers.

The task force appointed the Department of Evaluation and Testing to spearhead the formulation of a survey instrument which would elicit the above (as well as residual) information concerning all early school leavers from the Detroit schools during the 1982-83 and 1983-84 school years. Accordingly, a multi-faceted survey form was designed and submitted to the task force for review. After field test modifications, the intrument was approved for use in the study.

Detroit Public Schools attendance officers were selected to conduct the city-wide interviews. In-service training was provided for the interviewers to ensure operational familiarity with the instrument and procedural uniformity. The interview activity took place during the summer of 1985.

GENERAL PROCEDURAL ASPECTS

A summary of the procedures employed to implement the research on early school leavers from the Detroit Public Schools, compatible with the thrust of the project, was as follows.

1. A task force comprising many departments of the school system and State Department personnel was convened to address the problem of dropouts from the city's public schools.

2. Based on the committee's ultimate thrust, a survey form was designed and developed as a vehicle to obtain desired information on early school leavers.

3. Pertinent data were obtained from central office records concerning students who left school prematurely during the 1982-1984 school years.

4. School system attendance officers were given in-service training with regard to interview techniques and in-field use of the survey instrument.

5. After field testing the instrument, the attendance personnel were dispatched into the city's environs during the summer of 1985 to personally interview the 1982-84 school dropouts.

6. The completed instruments were returned to the Evaluation and Testing Department for processing. Pertinent data were analyzed, tabularized and/or described.

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA AND FINDINGS

The following section is addressed to the analysis of the data and related findings. For purposes of reference facilitation, each item of tabularized information and/or descriptive analysis has been depicted in sequence with its position on the research instrument listed in the Appendix.

Based on central office records concerning early school leavers from 1982-1984, a total of 1857 attempts were made by attendance officers to interview the dropout respondents. Not surprisingly, there were approximately one thousand attempted contacts by interviewers for which no relevant information was available due generally to populational mobility and related causes.

Although in some other cases, partial or second-hand data were obtained from relatives or former neighbors of the prospective respondents, this information was deemed invalid by the researcher and disregarded. Subsequently, 532 completed first-hand interviews with respondents were considered valid and relevant to the purposes of this study. The information accrued comprised the basis of this report.

The ensuing tables were intended to reflect the responses to the interview items or questions asked of the respondent. Dichotomies were generally effected relative to gender and further sub-structured according to the status of the respondents at the time of school leaving, i. e., non-pregnant or pregnant for the females and non-fatherhood or fatherhood for the males.[1]

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[1] In all subsequent tables, "row totals" depict responses irrespective of status category. "Column totals" comprise responses within each status category of respondents and their portion of the row totals. The totals may not in all cases equal precisely 100 percent due to percentage-rounding procedures.*

* The descriptive term "fatherhood" as used throughout this report refers to the status category of male respondents who had dropped out of school because of impending or actual fatherhood.

Demographic Data

The initial phase of the data-gathering activity was concerned with demographic and school related data generated by the respondents. Information was obtained regarding gender, ethnicity, current and dropout ages, average report card marks, grade level at time of school leaving, additional schooling, and current marital status of the interviewees.

Pertinent information was tabularized and/or described in Tables 1-5 which follow.

Gender

It was indicated in Table 1 that from a total of 532 early-school-leaver respondents, 222 (42 percent) were females. The data reflected that of the 222 females, 128 (58 percent) left school prematurely for reasons other than pregnancy, and 94 (42 percent) of the girls dropped out because of pregnancy.

The information inferred also that 310 (58 percent) of the dropouts who were interviewed were males. Twelve (4 percent) of them left school because of impending or actual fatherhood.

TABLE 1

GENDER OF RESPONDENTS

Gender	Females				Males				Row Total	
	Non Pregnant		Pregnant		Non Fatherhood		Fatherhood			
	N[1]	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.
Female	128	58%	94	42%	---	--	---	--	222	42%
Male	---	--	--	--	298	96%	12	4%	310	58%
Col. Total	128	24%	94	18%	298	56%	12	2%	532	100%

[1]N = number of respondents.

Ethnicity of the Respondents

Of the 517 respondents for whom ethnicity information was available, it was found that a vast majority (88 percent) were Black. Approximately one-tenth (11 percent) were White, and 1 percent were of Hispanic origin.

Age at Time of Interview

More than three-quarters (78 percent) of the respondents were aged eighteen through twenty-plus at the time they were interviewed. The largest number (30 percent) of them were eighteen, 26 percent were nineteen, and 22 percent of the interviewees were of age twenty or more.

Slightly more than one-eighth (15 percent) of the respondents were seventeen years of age, and 7 percent of them were sixteen or less when interviewed.

Dropout Age

The information in Table 2 (page 7) indicated that two-thirds of the total respondents dropped out of school at ages sixteen and seventeen in equal portions of 33 percent. Slightly more than one-quarter (27 percent) of them left school at the age of eighteen or more, and 8 percent were aged fifteen or less.

Although most males (35 percent) who dropped out for non-fatherhood reasons were aged seventeen, more than two-fifths (42 percent) of those who left school because of impending or actual fatherhood were sixteen years of age. The largest number of females who left school both for reasons of pregnancy (33 percent) and other than pregnancy (34 percent) were sixteen years of age.

Further analysis revealed that a substantial majority of the respondents were overaged when they dropped out of school. The students who left school while in Grades 7 and 8 were generally two years older than other students in those grade levels, and the youths who dropped out from Grades 9 and 10 were, for the most part, one and one-half years older than their peer group. Students who left school as eleventh graders were generally overaged by one year. Only the youths

TABLE 2

AGE OF RESPONDENTS AT TIME OF DROPPING OUT

Dropout Age	Females				Males				Row Total	
	Non Pregnant		Pregnant		Non Fatherhood		Fatherhood			
	N[1]	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.
13	0	0%	0	0%	1	0%	0	0%	1	0%
14	5	4%	7	8%	5	2%	0	0%	17	3%
15	7	5%	7	8%	9	3%	1	8%	24	5%
16	43	34%	31	33%	94	32%	5	42%	173	33%
17	40	31%	27	29%	104	35%	2	17%	173	33%
18+	33	26%	21	23%	82	28%	4	33%	140	27%
Col. Total	128	24%	93	18%	295	56%	12	2%	528	100%*

[1]N = number of respondents.

who dropped out as twelfth graders were in an age range commensurate with that of their peers.

Average Report Card Marks

The data in Table 3 (page 8) suggested that a slight majority (52 percent) of the early school leavers' self-reported average report card marks prior to dropping out of school were "C's". Slightly more than one-fourth (28 percent) of the respondents cited "D's". Only 10 percent of the dropouts reported "E's" as average marks, and approximately the same number of them reported "A's" and "B's".

TABLE 3

SELF-REPORTED AVERAGE REPORT CARD MARKS

Average Marks	Females				Males				Row Total	
	Non Pregnant		Pregnant		Non Fatherhood		Fatherhood			
	N[1]	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.
A's	1	1%	1	1%	2	1%	0	0%	4	1%
B's	15	12%	17	19%	15	5%	2	17%	49	10%
C's	69	56%	54	61%	140	48%	7	58%	270	52%
D's	26	21%	13	15%	102	35%	1	8%	142	28%
E's	13	10%	4	4%	31	11%	2	17%	50	10%
Col. Total	124	24%	89	17%	290	56%	12	2%	515	100%*

[1]N = number of respondents.

TABLE 4

GRADE AT TIME OF LEAVING SCHOOL

Grade	Females				Males				Row Total	
	Non Pregnant		Pregnant		Non Fatherhood		Fatherhood			
	N[1]	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.
7	1	1%	3	3%	4	1%	0	0%	8	2%
8	2	2%	11	12%	9	3%	0	0%	22	4%
9	43	34%	30	32%	120	41%	4	33%	197	37%
10	50	39%	27	29%	75	25%	4	33%	156	30%
11	17	13%	16	17%	52	18%	3	25%	88	17%
12	14	11%	7	7%	35	12%	1	8%	57	11%
Col. Total	127	24%	94	18%	295	56%	12	2%	528	100%*

[1]N = number of respondents.

Grade Level

It was implied by the information in Table 4 (page 8) that, overall, two-thirds (67 percent) of the respondents had dropped out of school while in the ninth and tenth grades. The largest number (37 percent) of students who left school prematurely were in Grade 9. Seventeen percent dropped out while in Grade 11, and 11 percent left school while in Grade 12.

An exception to the general pattern was manifested by the non-pregnant girls, the largest portion (39 percent) of whom dropped out of school from the tenth grade.

Additional Schooling

Table 5 delineated data which suggested that approximately three-fifths (59 percent) of the respondents had obtained additional schooling of some type since dropping out of school. Forty-one percent of the ex-students had not done so.

Interestingly, a rather large portion (57 percent) of the girls who left school for reasons of pregnancy had secured additional education since leaving school, whereas a comparatively smaller portion (33 percent) of the boys who

TABLE 5

ADDITIONAL SCHOOLING SINCE DROPPING OUT

Additional Schooling	Females				Males				Row Total	
	Non Pregnant		Pregnant		Non Fatherhood		Fatherhood			
	N[1]	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.
Yes	73	59%	50	57%	171	61%	3	33%	297	59%
No	50	41%	38	43%	109	39%	6	67%	213	41%
Col. Total	123	25%	88	18%	280	56%	9	2%	500	100%*

[1]N = number of respondents.

left because of fatherhood had done so.

Marital Status

Almost all (98 percent) of the respondents were unmarried at the time of interview. A slightly larger portion (4 percent) of the females who left school because of pregnancy were married in comparison to respondents in other status categories. None of the males who dropped out for reasons of fatherhood were married at the time of interview.

The following facet of the study (page 11) will be concerned with information related to the family background of the respondents at the time they left school.

Family Background

A second aspect for which the study sought data concerned the makeup or background of the immediate family of the respondents at the time of their school leaving. Hence, information was obtained regarding the number of siblings and also whether any siblings had dropped out of school. Also procured was information regarding the number of parents or guardians in the household, their employment status, and the educational background of the family members.

The data accrued were depicted in Tables 6-7 and/or described.

Number of Siblings

It was found that one-third (34 percent) of the total respondents had one or two brothers and/or sisters when they dropped out of school. Slightly less than one-third (31 percent) of them had three or four siblings, and about one-fourth (27 percent) of the school leavers had five or more siblings at the time.

Eight percent of the respondents had no siblings.

Number of Siblings Who Dropped Out

It was implied by the data in Table 6 (page 12) that almost three-fifths (59 percent) of the ex-students had no brothers and/or sisters who left school prematurely. Therefore, two-fifths of the respondents had at least one sibling who had dropped out of school.

Almost one-fifth (19 percent) of the youths had one sibling who had been a dropout, and approximately one-tenth (11 percent) of them had two such siblings. One-tenth (10 percent) of the youths had three or more brothers and/or sisters who had left school early.

TABLE 6

NUMBER OF SIBLINGS WHO DROPPED OUT

Number of Siblings	Females				Males				Row Total	
	Non Pregnant		Pregnant		Non Fatherhood		Fatherhood			
	N[1]	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.
0	72	56%	55	59%	183	61%	6	50%	316	59%
1	23	18%	16	17%	62	21%	2	17%	103	19%
2	12	9%	15	16%	31	10%	1	8%	59	11%
3+	21	16%	8	9%	22	7%	3	25%	54	10%
Col. Total	128	24%	94	18%	298	56%	12	2%	532	100%*

[1]N = number of respondents.

Parents at Home

The data in Table 7, below, implied that three-fifths (61 percent) of the respondents had one parent in the household when they left school. Slightly more than one-third (36 percent) of the interviewees had two parents at home during

TABLE 7

NUMBER OF PARENTS (OR GUARDIANS) AT HOME

Number	Females				Males				Row Total	
	Non Pregnant		Pregnant		Non Fatherhood		Fatherhood			
	N[1]	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.
0	6	5%	3	3%	5	2%	0	0%	14	3%
1	72	57%	64	70%	174	60%	7	58%	317	61%
2	49	39%	25	27%	109	38%	5	42%	188	36%
Col. Total	127	24%	92	18%	288	55%	12	2%	519	100%*

[1]N = number of respondents.

this period. There were no parents (or guardians) in the homes of three percent of the respondents.

As to information within the status categories of respondents, the data indicated that the girls who left because of pregnancy came from the largest comparative portion (70 percent) of one-parent homes.

Employment Background of Family

In one-third (33 percent) of the total households of respondents at the time of school leaving, there were no family members who were employed. In regard to the female respondents who left school for reasons of pregnancy, there were more than two-fifths (43 percent) of the households in which none of the family members were working. Moreover, with respect to the males who dropped out because of fatherhood, there were no family members who were employed in 45 percent of the homes.

Only the mother was employed in 21 percent of the total households. In 16 percent of the homes, only the father was employed. Both mother and father were working in 9 percent of the households.

Extrapolating from the data, it was determined that of those households in which any family member was working, 43 percent of the mothers, 35 percent of the fathers, 17 percent of the siblings, and 5 percent of other household members were employed at the time the respondents left school.

Educational Background of Family

There were no high school graduates in the immediate families of 20 percent of the respondents at the time they left school. In 19 percent of the families, only siblings were high school graduates, and only the mothers completed high school in 16 percent of the households.

Both father and mother graduated in 12 percent of the homes. The mother and sibling(s) completed high school in 11 percent of the households. All other

possible combinations of graduates in families approximated 22 percent.

Overall, of those families in which there were high school graduates, 39 percent of the mothers, 35 percent of the siblings, 23 percent of the fathers, and 3 percent of other household members completed high school.

Data concerning the home environment of the interviewees at the time of their school leaving were cited in the next facet of the study beginning on the following page.

Home Environment

The third facet of the study sought to obtain information regarding the home environment of the students at the time of school leaving. The youths were asked questions related to their parental relationships, parental feelings about dropping out (as well as their own), and to the identity of population groups which had tried to convince them to remain in school.

There were also queries concerning the convenience of home study and the existence of reading materials in their homes. The responses to the questions were cited in Tables 8-10 and/or described.

Relationship With Parents

As delineated in Table 8, almost three-quarters (73 percent) of the total respondents implied that they had a good relationship with their parents, particularly the boys who had dropped out of school for reasons of fatherhood, 83 percent of whom got along well with their parents prior to school leaving.

TABLE 8

HOW RESPONDENTS GOT ALONG WITH PARENTS

Type of Relationship	Females				Males				Row Total	
	Non Pregnant		Pregnant		Non Fatherhood		Fatherhood			
	N[1]	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.
Good	89	71%	63	68%	220	74%	10	83%	382	73%
So-so	27	22%	21	23%	62	21%	1	8%	111	21%
Not Good	9	7%	9	10%	14	5%	1	8%	33	6%
Col. Total	125	24%	93	18%	296	56%	12	2%	526	100%

[1]N = number of respondents.

Parental Feelings Regarding School Leaving

The information accrued suggested that more than four-fifths (86 percent) of the parents of the dropouts disapproved of their offspring's leaving school prematurely. One-tenth (10 percent) of the parents approved, and a relatively small number (4 percent) were unconcerned about their child's dropping out of school.

Students' Feelings About Dropping Out

It was indicated by the data in Table 9 that more than one-half (56 percent) of the respondents had negative feelings at the time of dropping out of school. Fewer than one-third (29 percent) of the youths had no strong feelings, and slightly more than one-eighth (15 percent) of the respondents had positive feelings concerning their leaving school.

TABLE 9

HOW RESPONDENTS FELT ABOUT DROPPING OUT

Personal Feeling	Females				Males				Row Total	
	Non Pregnant		Pregnant		Non Fatherhood		Fatherhood			
	N[1]	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.
Bad	68	54%	60	65%	156	53%	8	67%	292	56%
So-so	32	26%	25	27%	93	32%	3	25%	153	29%
Good	25	20%	8	9%	44	15%	1	8%	78	15%
Col. Total	125	24%	93	18%	293	56%	12	2%	523	100%

[1]N = number of respondents.

TABLE 10

PEOPLE WHO ENCOURAGED RESPONDENTS TO REMAIN IN SCHOOL

Population Groups	Females				Males				Row Total	
	Non Pregnant		Pregnant		Non Fatherhood		Fatherhood			
	N[1]	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.
No One	16	6%	11	6%	39	7%	1	4%	67	7%
Teachers	22	9%	17	9%	36	7%	3	13%	78	8%
Counselors	27	11%	30	16%	71	13%	4	17%	132	13%
Principal	7	3%	3	2%	8	1%	0	0%	18	2%
Parents	96	39%	68	37%	234	43%	9	38%	407	41%
Friends	30	12%	20	11%	44	8%	3	13%	97	10%
Church Members	3	1%	2	1%	8	1%	0	0%	13	1%
Relatives	41	17%	29	16%	83	15%	3	13%	156	16%
Others	6	2%	6	3%	22	4%	1	4%	35	3%
Col. Total	248	25%	186	19%	545	54%	24	2%	1003	100%*

[1]N = number of responses.

Groups Who Had Urged School Continuation

Among the various groups of people who had encouraged (albeit unsuccesfully) the respondents to remain in school (Table 10), parents were cited most often (41 percent of total responses), particularly among the major status category of males who had dropped out for other than fatherhood reasons (43 percent of their total responses).

Other groups who were most often cited for urging the youths to remain in school were relatives (16 percent), school counselors (13 percent), friends (10 percent), and teachers (8 percent). Only 7 percent of the responses were indicative that no one had tried to encourage the youths to remain in school.

Convenience for Home Study

It was found that almost nine-tenths (88 percent) of the respondents felt that the household milieu had been conducive to home study. One-eighth (12 percent) of the respondents stated that it was not convenient to study at home prior to leaving school.

Reading Materials at Home

More than nine-tenths (92 percent) of the early school leavers felt that there had been sufficient reading materials in the home at the time of dropping out of school. Slightly less than one-tenth (8 percent) of the youths believed otherwise.

The next facet of the study (beginning on page 19) was concerned with the relationships of the school dropouts with their peers and with their counselor and teachers at the time of school termination.

Peer Group and Teacher Relationships

This aspect of the study was concerned with obtaining data related to the number of close friends of the respondents at the time of leaving school and also whether any of the friends had dropped out of school. Information was sought also regarding the extent to which the students had gotten along with their school counselors and with their teachers. The data obtained were depicted in Tables 11-13 and tabularized and/or described.

Close Friends

Approximately one-third (32 percent) of the respondents had one or two close friends at the time of school leaving. Twenty-four percent of the youths had three or four close friends, 10 percent of them had five or six such friends, and 20 percent of the interviewees had seven or more intimate friends.

Fourteen percent of the respondents indicated that they had no close friends prior to dropping out of school.

TABLE 11

NUMBER OF CLOSE FRIENDS WHO DROPPED OUT OF SCHOOL

Number	Females				Males				Row Total	
	Non Pregnant		Pregnant		Non Fatherhood		Fatherhood			
	N[1]	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.
None	71	60%	51	59%	129	45%	2	18%	253	50%
1-2	32	27%	24	28%	106	37%	4	36%	166	33%
3-4	8	7%	5	6%	30	10%	2	18%	45	9%
5-6	6	5%	4	5%	11	4%	2	18%	23	5%
7+	2	2%	2	2%	11	4%	1	9%	16	3%
Col. Total	119	24%	86	17%	287	57%	11	2%	503	100%

[1]N = number of respondents.

Close Friends Who Dropped Out

The information cited in Table 11 (page 19) inferred that one-half (50 percent) of the respondents had at least one close friend who had dropped out of school. One-third (33 percent) of the interviewees had one or two such friends who left school, and 9 percent of them had three or four dropout friends. Five percent had five or six friends who were dropouts, and 3 percent of the respondents had seven or more close friends who left school prematurely.

The remainder of the interviewees (50 percent) had no close friends who were school leavers.

Relationship With Counselor

As per the data in Table 12, slightly more than one-half (51 percent) of the dropouts had amiable relationships with their school counselors. Approximately one-third (31 percent) had "so-so" relationships, and slightly fewer than one-fifth (18 percent) of them did not get along well with their counselor.

TABLE 12

RELATIONSHIP WITH SCHOOL COUNSELOR

Relationship	Females				Males				Row Total	
	Non Pregnant		Pregnant		Non Fatherhood		Fatherhood			
	N[1]	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.
Not Good	28	22%	13	14%	49	17%	1	8%	91	18%
So-so	31	25%	25	27%	103	35%	3	25%	162	31%
Good	66	53%	53	58%	140	48%	8	67%	267	51%
Col. Total	125	24%	91	18%	292	56%	12	2%	520	100%

[1]N = number of respondents.

TABLE 13

RELATIONSHIP WITH TEACHERS

Relationship	Females				Males				Row Total	
	Non Pregnant		Pregnant		Non Fatherhood		Fatherhood			
	N[1]	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.
Not Good	12	10%	6	7%	39	13%	0	0%	57	11%
So-so	45	36%	33	36%	119	40%	3	25%	200	38%
Good	68	54%	53	58%	136	46%	9	75%	266	51%
Col. Total	125	24%	92	18%	294	56%	12	2%	523	100%

[1]N = number of respondents.

Relationship With Teachers

The information (Table 13) implied that approximately one-half (51 percent) of the youths had gotten along well with their teachers. Almost two-fifths (38 percent) of the students had "so-so" relationships, and about one-tenth (11 percent) of them had a negative rapport with their classroom teachers.

With respect to responses within status classifications of respondents, the girls who dropped out because of pregnancy and the boys who left for reasons of fatherhood had the largest comparative portions of positive relationships with the teachers (58 percent and 75 percent), respectively.

The following section (page 22) sought to obtain data from the respondents regarding their reasons for leaving school prematurely.

Reasons for Leaving School

The respondents were asked by the interviewers why they had dropped out of school. Many youths advanced more than one reason, all of which were duly noted. Categories of anticipated reasons had been pre-structured into the survey instrument as follow: (1) pregnancy, (2) fatherhood, (3) school related, (4) family related, (5) peer related, and (6) miscellaneous. The interviewer elicited the responses without prompting and used the instrument solely for recording purposes.

The responses were recorded either in anticipated categories or, if appropriate, in an open-ended manner. They were subsequently analyzed and cited in additional response categories as necessary. The accrued information (other than that concerning the reasons of pregnancy and fatherhood depicted in Table 1) was cited in Table 14, page 23, and described.

School Related

The data inferred that the most frequently cited (27 percent) school-related reasons, overall, for dropping out of school were that school was a boring experience and also that the respondents had failing grades. The next most frequently cited (23 percent) reason was that of suspension or expulsion.

The composite (23 percent) of all other school-related reasons given for leaving school such as problems with school staff, truancy, safety, etc., was also cited.

Family Related

As per the information in Table 14, the largest number (37 percent) of the family-related responses given for school leaving were pertinent to having to care for and/or support a child. It may be seen in extrapolation that 90 percent of the total responses concerning child care were advanced by the respondents who had dropped out of school because of pregnancy or fatherhood. Eleven percent

TABLE 14

REASONS FOR DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL

Reasons	Females				Males				Row Total	
	Non Pregnant		Pregnant		Non Fatherhood		Fatherhood			
	N[1]	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.
School Related										
School was boring	37	31%	6	23%	80	27%	1	8%	124	27%
Failing grades	30	25%	9	35%	78	26%	5	42%	122	27%
Suspension or expulsion	26	22%	5	19%	72	24%	2	17%	105	23%
Miscellaneous	27	23%	6	23%	67	23%	4	33%	104	23%
Column Total	120	26%	26	6%	297	65%	12	3%	455	100%
Family Related										
Had to support child	1	7%	15	68%	1	8%	3	75%	20	37%
Married (or plans for)	1	7%	4	18%	0	0%	1	25%	6	11%
Had to support parents	1	7%	0	0%	4	31%	0	0%	5	9%
Miscellaneous	12	80%	3	14%	8	62%	0	0%	23	43%
Column Total	15	28%	22	41%	13	24%	4	7%	54	100%
Peer Related										
Friends were dropping out	7	41%	3	43%	20	45%	2	100%	32	46%
Peer incompatibility	8	47%	4	57%	21	48%	0	0%	33	47%
Siblings were leaving	1	6%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%
Miscellaneous	1	6%	0	0%	3	7%	0	0%	4	6%
Column Total	17	24%	7	10%	44	63%	2	3%	70	100%
Other										
Wanted to get a job	13	48%	5	33%	74	75%	4	100%	96	66%
Illness or disability	11	41%	9	60%	16	16%	0	0%	36	25%
Miscellaneous	3	11%	1	7%	9	9%	0	0%	13	9%
Column Total	27	19%	15	10%	99	68%	4	3%	145	100%

[1]N = number of responses.

of the responses were related to dropping out because of marriage or planning for marriage, and 9 percent of them were indicative of a need to care for or support parents.

There was a rather sizable number (43 percent) of miscellaneous responses such as a need to care for family members, death in family, economic reasons, and others. However, none of them were of sufficient similarity, numerically, to warrant a table citation or description.

Peer Related

The data in Table 14 implied that the peer-related responses advanced most often (47 percent) for early school termination were in regard to an inability to get along with other students and also that friends of the respondents were dropping out of school (46 percent). Only 1 percent of the responses suggested that an early school leaving of siblings was influential in the respondents' decisions to drop out.

Six percent of the responses were of a miscellaneous nature.

Other

In regard to the responses for school leaving which were not classified as school, family, or peer related, it was indicated that the predominant reason for dropping out of school was the desire to gain employment (66 percent). The next most frequently cited reason for leaving was that of illness or disability (25 percent). Miscellaneous reasons comprised 9 percent of the responses.

The next facet of the study beginning on page 25 was concerned with the reasons why the dropouts had not reenrolled in school.

School Reenrollment

As a followup to the preceding section of the study which was involved with reasons why the youths had dropped out of school, this section was concerned with eliciting reasons why the dropouts had not returned to school. The method used to obtain this information was identical to that of the previous facet.

In addition to the above, the interviewees were asked questions related to their awareness of the existence of an adult education program and, if so, whether they had applied for enrollment. The youths were also queried regarding which courses or services could have been provided by the schools that would have kept them in school and also, if currently available, would promote their return.

Responses to the above were cited in Table 15 and/or described.

Reasons for Non-Return

It was indicated by the data in Table 15 (page 26) that the reasons most often cited by the dropouts for not returning to school were that they were employed or seeking a job (20 percent of total responses) and also that they were enrolled in or completed a G.E.D. program (19 percent).

The next largest numbers of responses were in reference to the youths' having lost interest in school (13 percent) and also that they would be uncomfortable now in a school setting due to overageness and related reasons (12 percent). Nine percent of the total responses were in regard to a need to care for a child, and 7 percent of the responses indicated that the respondents were enrolled in or completed an adult education program.

As to responses within the status categories of respondents, two-fifths (40 percent) of the responses generated by the females who had dropped out because of pregnancy were indicative of the need to care for a child. An almost identical portion of responses (39 percent) was manifested by the males who left school for reasons of fatherhood with regard to having or looking for a job.

TABLE 15

REASONS WHY RESPONDENTS HAVE NOT RETURNED TO SCHOOL

Reasons	Females				Males				Row Total	
	Non Pregnant		Pregnant		Non Fatherhood		Fatherhood			
	N[1]	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.
Need to care for or support child	7	5%	54	40%	1	0%	3	17%	65	9%
Working or looking for a job	21	14%	12	9%	103	26%	7	39%	143	20%
Enrolled in a job training program (or planning to)	6	4%	5	4%	12	3%	3	17%	26	4%
Enrolled in or completed a G.E.D. program	38	25%	17	13%	77	19%	3	17%	135	19%
Would not fit in a school setting (overage, etc.)	15	10%	15	11%	53	13%	0	0%	83	12%
Could not successfully do the work now	0	0%	4	3%	7	2%	0	0%	11	2%
Lost interest in school	21	14%	7	5%	62	16%	0	0%	90	13%
Illness	6	4%	3	2%	5	1%	0	0%	14	2%
Enrolled in or completed adult education program	12	8%	5	4%	32	8%	0	0%	49	7%
Reenrolled in school and/or graduated	8	5%	6	4%	7	2%	0	0%	21	3%
Planning reenrollment	8	5%	1	1%	4	1%	0	0%	13	2%
Schools would not accept reenrollment	1	1%	1	1%	7	2%	2	11%	11	2%
Transferred to other area schools	2	1%	0	0%	5	1%	0	0%	7	1%
In military service or planning to enter	0	0%	0	0%	7	2%	0	0%	7	1%
Other	9	6%	6	4%	13	3%	0	0%	28	4%
Column Total	154	22%	136	19%	395	56%	18	3%	703	100%*

[1]N = number of responses.

Adult Education Program

It was found that nine-tenths (90 percent) of the early school leavers were aware of the existence and availability of an adult education program. About one-half (46 percent) of the youths had applied for enrollment.

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TABLE 16

COURSES WHICH, IF PROVIDED, COULD HAVE KEPT RESPONDENTS IN SCHOOL OR WOULD BRING THEM BACK

Courses	Females				Males				Row Total	
	Non Pregnant		Pregnant		Non Fatherhood		Fatherhood			
	N[1]	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.
Vocational technical and trades	8	25%	0	0%	33	36%	1	33%	42	32%
Computer	11	34%	2	50%	11	12%	0	0%	24	18%
Electronics	0	0%	0	0%	16	18%	0	0%	16	12%
Work study	0	0%	0	0%	16	18%	0	0%	16	12%
Auto mechanics	0	0%	0	0%	11	12%	0	0%	11	8%
Reading	3	9%	0	0%	4	4%	0	0%	7	5%
Arts and crafts	4	13	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	4	3%
Others (assorted)	6	19%	2	50%	0	0%	2	67%	10	8%
Column Total	32	25%	4	3%	91	70%	3	2%	130	100%*

[1] N = number of responses.

School Retention Courses

Almost one-third (32 percent) of the total responses cited in Table 16 (page 27) indicated that vocational-technical and trades courses, if available, could have prevented the youths from dropping out or would encourage them to re-enroll in regular school.[1] Computer (18 percent of total responses), electronics (12 percent), and work study (12 percent) programs also received comparatively large portions of responses.

Among the responses of females who left school because of pregnancy and also for reasons other than pregnancy, computer courses were cited most often (50 percent and 34 percent), respectively. A sizable portion of responses (25 percent) within the status category of non-pregnant females was in reference to vocational-technical and trades courses.

Voc-tech and trades courses were also cited most frequently by the males in both the non-fatherhood and fatherhood status categories of responses (36 percent and 33 percent), sequentially.

School Retention Services

Approximately one-fifth (19 percent) of the total responses (Table 17, page 29) suggested that if teachers had been more concerned and/or better informed, the dropouts might have remained in school or would be encouraged to return.

The next largest portion (15 percent) of responses, overall, were in reference to the school program. The respondents indicated that if they could have been given the program they wanted, they would not have dropped out. Almost one-quarter (23 percent) of the girls who left school for reasons other than pregnancy did so because of an undesirable program, as well as for a perceived lack of more concerned teachers.

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[1] Vocational-technical and trades courses have been and are currently available in five regional centers of the city.

TABLE 17

SERVICES WHICH, IF PROVIDED, COULD HAVE KEPT RESPONDENTS IN SCHOOL OR WOULD BRING THEM BACK

Services	Females				Males				Row Total	
	Non Pregnant		Pregnant		Non Fatherhood		Fatherhood			
	N[1]	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.
More concerned, better informed teachers	10	23%	2	9%	10	23%	0	0%	22	19%
More flexibility in programming	10	23%	0	0%	7	16%	0	0%	17	15%
Better counseling and guidance	3	7%	0	0%	11	26%	1	17%	15	13%
Day care services for child	3	7%	12	55%	0	0%	0	0%	15	13%
Better security	4	9%	0	0%	6	14%	1	17%	11	10%
Better school organization	0	0%	0	0%	5	12%	0	0%	5	4%
Home teaching and tutoring	3	7%	2	9%	0	0%	0	0%	5	4%
More social worker service	5	12%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	5	4%
Transportation	3	7%	2	9%	0	0%	0	0%	5	4%
Other (assorted)	2	5%	4	18%	4	9%	4	67%	14	12%
Column Total	43	38%	22	19%	43	38%	6	5%	114	100%*

[1] N = number of responses.

Fifty-five percent of the pregnancy dropouts inferred that if child care facilities were conveniently available to them, they could have remained or might return to regular school.

The final facet of the research function (page 30) was concerned only with those school leavers who had dropped out because of pregnancy or fatherhood.

Miscellaneous Information

The concluding facet of the research was concerned solely with the respondents who left school for reasons of pregnancy or fatherhood. Its intent was to learn whether these youths were aware of particular information and available services which could be helpful to them.

Six questions which were geared to generate such data from the females were delineated in Table 18, page 31. The initial three questions which were also pertinent to the males were cited in Table 19 (page 32). The responses were depicted and described.

Finally, two general questions were asked of all respondents to learn if parents or guardians were present during the interviews and whether they had participated in the activity. The results were summarized and described.

Informational Awareness (Females)

The data implied that the females who had dropped out of school for reasons of pregnancy had varying degrees of awareness regarding the information and services reflected by the six questions in Table 18.

The greatest extent of awareness concerned Question 1 in reference to which more than nine-tenths (91 percent) of the females were aware that they did not have to drop out of school because of pregnancy. It was indicated also (Question 2) that approximately the same number (89 percent) of girls were cognizant of legal and social services available to them.

Seventy-one percent of the females stated that they would return to school if a free child care facility were available (Question 4). Sixty-one percent of them inferred that they had taken personal health management or sex education classes in school (Question 3).

Least awareness (55 percent) among this population concerned Question 5 which pertained to knowledge of the availability of other school programs with

TABLE 18

AWARENESS OF PERTINENT INFORMATION AND SERVICES AVAILABLE TO DROPOUTS FOR REASON OF PREGNANCY

Questions for Female Respondents	Females				Total
	No		Yes		
	N[1]	Pct.	N	Pct.	N
1. Were you aware that you did not have to drop out of school because of pregnancy?	8	9%	80	91%	88
2. Have you been advised of legal and social services available such as Friend of the Court, ADC, etc.?	10	11%	79	89%	89
3. Had you taken any classes in school which included personal health management or sex education prior to leaving?	35	39%	55	61%	90
4. Would you return to regular school if you had available a free child care facility?	24	29%	59	71%	83
5. Were you aware that there are other school programs with free child care which are available to you?	40	45%	49	55%	89
6. Would you be interested in enrolling in such a program?	34	40%	50	60%	84

[1]N = number of respondents.

free child care. Sixty percent of the females indicated that they would be interested in enrolling in such a program (Question 6).

Informational Awareness (Males)

The response data cited in Table 19, page 32, indicated that the males who had dropped out of school for reasons of impending or actual fatherhood were generally somewhat less aware of potentially helpful information and services available to them than were the pregnant school leavers.

Slightly more than four-fifths (83 percent) of the males had been advised

TABLE 19

AWARENESS OF PERTINENT INFORMATION AND SERVICES AVAILABLE TO DROPOUTS FOR REASON OF FATHERHOOD

Questions for Male Respondents	Males				Total
	No		Yes		
	N[1]	Pct.	N	Pct.	N
1. Were you aware that you did not have to drop out of school because of fatherhood?	3	30%	7	70%	10
2. Have you been advised of legal and social services available such as Friend of the Court, ADC, etc.?	2	17%	10	83%	12
3. Had you taken any classes in school which included personal health management or sex education prior to leaving?	5	42%	7	58%	12

[1]N = number of respondents.

of legal and social services available to them (Question 2). Seventy percent of the boys were aware that they were not required to leave school because of fatherhood (Question 1).

Approximately three-fifths (58 percent) of the male respondents had taken classes in personal health management or sex education (Question 3).

Parental Presence and Participation

At the conclusion of each interview of all respondents, the interviewers had been instructed to note on the survey instrument whether a parent or guardian had been present and also whether the parent had taken part in the function.

In reference to these observations, it was found that a parent was in attendance in 57 percent of the total interviews. It was also determined that of the interviews in which a parent had been in attendance, the parent had participated in approximately one-fourth of the activities.

PART II

A PROFILE OF DROPOUTS

Summary and Reflections

A massive city-wide research project involving students who dropped out of the Detroit Public Schools during the years of 1982 through 1984 was conducted in 1985. Its purpose was to obtain multi-faceted information and insight regarding the early school leaver syndrome so that more relevant direction could be provided in attempts to alleviate the problem.

The information was acquired through 532 personal interviews with youths who had dropped out of school during the above period. The vehicle used to gather the data was a survey instrument designed to elicit demographic, family background, home environment, peer and teacher relationship, reasons for dropout, and other related information pertaining both to the time of school leaving and to the present.

It was intended that via an analysis of the compiled information, a pattern or profile would be established which could be used by educators as an aid toward identifying at-risk students so that viable preventative or remediative measures could be implemented early on.

Following the attempts to formulate patterns based on the findings of each facet of the study, the researcher added his own reflections of the results which were intended, in part, to serve as stimuli to further thought and reaction by interested parties.

Demographic Data

A typical dropout during the two-year period of 1982-84 was of Black origin, 16 or 17 years of age, in the ninth or tenth grade at the time of school leaving, and probably overaged by two years. The early school leaver was either a male or female (with a slightly higher probability that the gender was male) who had

a "C" average in self-reported report card marks. If the youngster was female in gender, the chances were two out of five that the girl was pregnant at the time. If the youth was a male, there was a one out of twenty chance that he left school for reasons of impending or actual fatherhood.

Since leaving regular school, the dropout had in most cases obtained some sort of additional schooling. As to marital status, he or she is probably unmarried.

* * *

It is interesting that slightly more than one-half of the youths had reported a "C" average in report card marks prior to dropping out of school. This retrospective self-appraisal of academic performance may have been somewhat inflated since it was rather contrary to school-related reasons given by the respondents for dropping out (page 23) in which failing grades were cited by many as major reasons for school termination. Perhaps a "D" average would have been more generally realistic.

Regardless, the thought occurs that a conceivably inflated self-appraisal of academic accomplishment could suggest that a semblance of pride was still prevalent among the ex-students despite their decision to terminate their education. Since many of the youths had obtained some sort of schooling after dropping out, perhaps a number of them would be likely candidates for reenrollment in regular school.

Family Background

As to family background, the average early school leaver had three or possibly more brothers and/or sisters in the home at the time of school leaving. The chances were two out of five that at least one of the siblings had dropped out of school. In all probability, the dropout came from a home in which only one parent or guardian was in residence, particularly so if the student had dropped out

for reasons of pregnancy.

There was a one out of three probability that no one in the household of the dropout was employed at the time of leaving school. If a parent was employed, it was in most cases the mother.

In regard to the extent of education of household members, the chances were four out of five that at least one member of the family, usually a sibling, had graduated from high school. If a parent had completed high school, it was probably the mother.

* * *

Since two-fifths of the dropouts had brothers and/or sisters who left school prematurely, it would seem that the school-leaving tendencies of siblings may have had a bearing in the youths' own decisions to leave school. However, this impression appeared to be refuted by previously cited information (page 24) which indicated that peer group influence was a much more potent factor in the respondents' dropping out of school than was school leaving on the part of siblings. At any rate, further study in this area seems appropriate.

With regard to the extent of education of household members, in most homes a sibling had graduated from high school. However, it was not typical that a parent had done so.

Whether the extent of employment with respect to members of the household was a factor in generating dropout tendencies is subject to speculation.

Home Environment

In regard to the home environment of the school leavers at the time of dropping out, the youths generally got along well with their parents who, in most cases, disapproved of their child's leaving school. As to how the dropouts felt at the time, slightly more than one-half of the youths had negative feelings about school leaving.

Among various segments of people who had tried to convince the students to remain in school, parents were the predominant group, followed in turn by relatives, school counselors, friends of the youths, teachers, and others.

The household milieu was considered to have been a convenient place for school study, and there were usually sufficient reading materials in the home.

* * *

It appears that the students had decided to drop out despite a generally positive relationship with their parents who wanted them to remain in school, and despite the efforts of relatives, counselors, friends, and others to discourage them from doing so.

The fact that it was convenient to study at home and also that there were sufficient reading materials in the household tended to negate any conception to the contrary in regard to those aspects of the school leavers' home environment.

Peer Group and Teacher Relationships

The school dropouts were generally not lacking in close friends at the time of leaving school. Approximately one-third had one or two close friends, and slightly more than one-half of them had three or more such friends. One-eighth of the students had no close friends at the time.

However, it was found that one-half of the early school leavers also had one or more of their close friends who had dropped out of school.

In reference to their relationships with school staff members, one-half of the students got along well with their school counselors, one-third had "so-so" relationships, and fewer than one-fifth of them did not get along well with counselors. The students' relationships with their classroom teachers generally followed a similar pattern.

* * *

Although a dearth of intimate friends was not a usual characteristic of the school leavers, it seems somewhat unusual that one out of eight dropouts had no one whom they considered to be a close friend.

It appears that the occurence of having close friends who had dropped out of school was a factor in the decisions of the students to leave school prematurely.

The finding that four out of five students had established at least "so-so" relationships with both their counselors and teachers indicates that dissatisfaction with staff members was not a major influence in their school leaving.

Reasons for Leaving School

It had been indicated previously by the data (page 5) that 42 percent of the girls and 4 percent of the boys who had dropped out of school had done so primarily for reasons of pregnancy or fatherhood.

Aside from this information, the most frequently-cited school related reasons for premature school leaving were the respondents' failing grades and, equally that school was a boring experience for them. The next most often cited reason was that of suspension or expulsion.

As to family-related causes for dropping out of school, many varied and personal reasons were advanced which comprised about two-fifths of the responses. Apart from these miscellaneous responses, the primary family-related reason given for leaving school was that of having to care for or support a child.

The major peer-related reasons given for school leaving were that friends of the respondents were dropping out and also that the respondents were unable to get along with other students.

In reference to other causes for dropping out, a frequently-cited reason given by the ex-students for premature school leaving was the desire to obtain a job and earn money.

* * *

The sizable number of girls who dropped out of school for reasons of pregnancy as well the number of boys who left because of fatherhood is indeed disturbing and presents educators with the formidable challenge of developing new stategies to cope with the problem.

In regard to the comparatively large number of youths who left school because of suspension or expulsion, perhaps more effective remediative measures could be implemented early on to deal with those youngsters who display negative behavioral tendencies in order to alleviate escalations of misbehavior in later grades, leading to disciplinary dismissal.

The main family-related reason for leaving school which pertained to the need to care for a child served to accentuate the problem of the large number of girls who leave school because of pregnancy.

It also appears that having close friends who had dropped out of school was a factor in the decisions of many of the students to do likewise.

School Reenrollment

The main definitive reasons given by the dropouts for not subsequently returning to regular school were that they were currently employed or seeking a job and also that they had applied for or were enrolled in a G.E.D. program.

Following the above in frequency of reasons advanced for not reenrolling were that the youths had lost interest in school, and equally, that they would not feel comfortable now in a school setting.

Many of the females who had dropped out of school for reasons of pregnancy indicated that they had not reenrolled because of the desire to personally care for their child and also that there was no one else available to do so.

Nine out of ten school leavers were aware of the existence of an adult education program. Approximately one-half of the respondents who were aware of its availability had applied for enrollment.

In response to queries concerning which courses could have kept the youths in school or would bring them back, vocational-technical courses and trades were cited most often. Computer, electronics, and work study courses were also frequently cited.

A similar query regarding school services led to responses suggesting that if teachers had been or could be more concerned and/or better informed, the youths would have remained in school or could return. Other high frequency responses indicated that if the students could have obtained the program they wanted, they would not have dropped out.

One out of every two of the girls who dropped out for reasons of pregnancy implied that they could have remained in or would return to regular school if child day care facilities were available.

* * *

An optimistic note regarding the dropout syndrome is that approximately one-fifth of the youths had enrolled in a G.E.D. program, and one-tenth of them were involved in adult education programs or had reenrolled in regular school.

Many school leavers had indicated that a lack of voc-tech and trades courses was detrimental to returning to school. This was surprising in view of the availability of such facilities in five regional centers of the city. One can only conjecture about the reasons underlying these responses. If a lack of knowledge of their existence is a reason, perhaps more diligent efforts can be made by school counselors and staff to make their availability known to students.

It also appears that a number of youths could not obtain the program they wanted and left school as a result. Possibly a greater flexibility in programming to adher to the self-perceived needs of such students, particularly at the onset, could be effected which might encourage them to remain in school, acquire academic confidence, and eventually conclude specified requirements for graduation.

Pertinent to pregnant dropouts, it seems that school officials should explore the possibility of expanding the child day care programs to include more schools if such girls are to continue their education.

Miscellaneous Information

A sizable majority of the youths who had dropped out of school for reasons of pregnancy and fatherhood were aware of information and services which could be of help to them. Nine of every ten of the girls and seven out of ten of the boys knew that they did not have to leave school for the reasons above. A slightly smaller portion of them were cognizant of legal and social services available. Moreover, three of every five had taken personal health management or sex education classes in school.

A substantial majority of the girls indicated that they would return to school if a free child care facility became available. Approximately one-half of the females were aware of the existence of other school programs which offered free child care, and a great many of the girls implied that they would be interested in enrolling in such a program.

* * *

It appears that the students who dropped out of school because of pregnancy or fatherhood were generally knowledgable about their school continuation rights and were also cognizant of the legal and social services available to them.

The fact that three of every five youths had taken personal health management or sex education classes tends to raise the dilemmatic question of whether the present courses should be revised to make a more positive impact, or whether they should be expanded to include more students, possibly offering them at an earlier grade level, or both. Or perhaps, along with the knowledge acquired is a need for a clarification of values followup which involves the implications and consequences of sexual activity so that clear and more responsible choices could be made in this regard.

Since one-half of the female dropouts indicated an interest in returning to regular school if free child care programs were readily available, school authorities should consider the feasibility of expanding such facilites if the reenrollment of such ex-students is to be effected.

The concluding phase of the research on Detroit Public Schools dropouts (page 42) contains recommendations presented by the researcher for consideration by central office and school personnel concerning the possible ameliorization of the early school leaver problem.

Recommendations

Based on the procedures employed to obtain information regarding early school leavers from the Detroit Public Schools and the findings of this research, the following recommendations have been generated.

1. More effective strategies should be developed and implemented to cope with the disturbing problem of girls and boys dropping out of school because of pregnancy and fatherhood. A clarification of values phase should be made an integral part of sex education courses to instill upon youngsters the ramifications and consequences of sexual activity on their future lives so that knowledgable and responsible choices could be made in this regard.

2. Rigorous efforts should be made by school staff members to identify and monitor the academic progress of close friends and siblings of at-risk students so that remediative measures could be exerted, as necessary, to diminish the "band wagon" effect upon early school leaving.

3. An in-depth followup study is recommended to learn why so many students had found school to be boring or unappealing in order to determine if viable curriculum or other changes could be made to strengthen school retention.

4. School administrators should generate a thrust to identify and remediate youngsters in their early stages of negative behavioral tendencies to alleviate or preclude later escalations or misbehavior which could result in eventual suspension or expulsion from school.

5. Plans should be made and implemented to encourage school counselors

and other staff members to more actively locate and recruit potential candidates for enrollment in the vocational-technical centers' evening as well as day programs. School programs should also be adjusted, if necessary, to facilitate enrollment.

6. There should be an expansion of child care facilities and programs to include more schools in order to facilitate the reenrollment of students who left school for reasons of pregnancy. The Continuing Education for Girls Program should be better publicized and expanded.

7. School personnel should explore the feasibility of more flexible programming to meet the self-perceived needs of at-risk students, particularly so if the alternative appears to be early school leaving.

8. A followup program should be established whereby systematic procedures would be in place to contact dropouts within a period of six months of school leaving for the purpose of promoting their return to school. An organized support system should also be effected and implemented to ensure their continued enrollment.

APPENDIX

The Research Instrument

Evaluation and Testing
Detroit Public Schools

Cover Sheet

Interviewer's name _____

Respondent label

Record of attempts to contact respondent

	CALL 1		CALL 2		CALL 3	
Date						
Time						
Results (Circle code)	NA	IR	NA	IR	NA	IR
	IS	NC	IS	NC	IS	NC

Code: NA=No Answer IS=Interview scheduled IR=Interview refused NC=No contact made

Interview record

Date of interview_____ Time of interview _____ AM __ PM __

Results:(Place an "X" in the appropriate box.)

	Interview completed
	Interview partially completed. Respondent terminated the interview. State reason_____
	Respondent not available after 3 check-backs
	Respondent refused interview

April, 1985
Evaluation and Testing
Cover Sheet

DETROIT SCHOOL LEAVERS PROJECT

INITIAL CONTACT PROMPT:

I am _____ _____, representing the Detroit Public Schools. You may wish to examine my identification. (Present I.D. to person answering the door).

Our records indicate that _____ _____left the Detroit Public School district prior to graduation.

Our school system is interested in gathering some information about such students. We are interviewing a number of them, and _____ (name of student) has been selected to help us in this survey. May I speak to her/him, please? (If you are speaking to the student, continue ... otherwise, ask to speak to the student and repeat).

The information will be used to see if the school system should build new kinds of programs which would keep students in school and help them graduate.

May I come in, please? Thank you. The survey will take 10 or 15 minutes of your time.

(Follow survey instructions exactly from this point)

FEMALE DETROIT MALE

Pregnancy (P): No____ Yes____ SCHOOL LEAVERS PROJECT Fatherhood (F): No____ Yes____

PROMPT: I would like to begin by asking some questions about your background.

A. Demographic Data

1. Race (observe: do not ask) : Am. Ind.___ Asian___ Black___ Hisp.___ White___
2. Age (present) : 14____ 15____ 16____ 17____ 18____ 19____ 20+____
3. Age (at time of leaving) : 14 or less____ 15____ 16____ 17____ 18+____
4. School last attended (full time): _____
5. Marks (self-reported average) : Mostly A's___ B's___ C's___ D's___ E's___
6. Date you left school : Month_____ Year_____
7. Grade level at that time : 7____ 8____ 9____ 10____ 11____ 12____
8. Additional schooling (any since): No___ Yes___: Where?_____
   : How much?_____
9. Are you married ? No____ Yes____

PROMPT: Please tell me about your family at the time you left school.

B. Family Background

1. How many brothers or sisters ? None____ Younger____ Older____
2. Had any of them dropped out ? No____ Yes____: (if yes)
   How many were younger?____ older?____
3. Number of parents (guardians) at home ? 0____ 1____ 2____ 3+____
4. Who in your family was employed ? Mother___ Father___ Sibling(s)___ Other_____
   No one____
5. Who in your family graduated from high school ? Mother___ Father___ Sibling(s)___ Other_____
   No one____

PROMPT: What was your home situation like at the time you left school?

C. Home Environment

1. How did you get along with your parents or guardian ? Not good____ So-so____ Good____

2. How did your parents feel about your dropping out of school ? Disapproved____ Didn't Care ____ Approved____

3. How did you feel at time of dropping out ? Bad____ No Strong Feeling____ Good____

4. Who (if anyone) tried to get you to stay in school ?

No one	_____	Parents	_____
Teacher(s)	_____	Friends	_____
Counselor	_____	Church Member	_____
Principal	_____	Relative	_____
		Other	_____

5. Was it convenient for you to study at home ? No____ Yes____

6. Were there reading materials at home ? No____ Yes____

PROMPT: Now I would like to ask some questions about your friends, your counselor, and your teachers at the time you left school.

D. Peer-Group and Teacher Relationships

1. How many close friends did you have ? None___ 1-2___ 3-4___ 5-6___ 7+___

2. How many of them dropped out of school ? None___ 1-2___ 3-4___ 5-6___ 7+___

3. How did you get along with your counselor ? Not Good____ So-so____ Good____

4. How did you get along with your teachers ? Not Good____ So-so____ Good____

PROMPT: Would you please tell me why you left school? (Do not read items to obtain responses. If there is no response, ask: Did you leave because of school problems, family problems, or for other reasons?)

E. Reasons for Leaving School (Check all items which apply. Then rank order responses according to importance: 1 = most important, 2 = next most important, etc.)

1. Pregnancy . . . /___

2. Fatherhood . . . /___

3. School related . . . /___ (a) Failing grades

. . . /___ (b) Felt school wasn't necessary

. . . /___ (c) School was boring (if so): What in particular? _____

. . . /___ (d) Couldn't get program I wanted

. . . /___ (e) Suspended or expelled (if so): Why? _____

. . . /___ (f) Safety reasons

. . . /___ (g) Language problems

. . /___ (Other) _____

4. Family related . . . /___ (a) Had to help support my child

. . . /___ (b) Had to help support parents, etc.

. . . /___ (c) Married or planned to get married

. . /___ (Other) _____

5. Peer related . . . /___ (a) Couldn't get along with other students

. . . /___ (b) Friends were dropping out

. . . /___ (c) Sisters and/or brothers were dropping out

. . /___ (Other) _____

6. Miscellaneous . . . /___ (a) Wanted to get job and make some money (if so): Did you get job? No____ Yes____

. . . /___ (b) Illness or disability (if so): Are you ill now? No____ Yes____

. . /___ (Other) _____

PROMPT: Now please tell me why you have not returned to school? (Do not read items to respondent unless necessary to obtain response.)

F. School Re-enrollment (Check all items which apply)

_____ (a) I want to personally care for my child

_____ (b) There is no one else to care for my child

_____ (c) I am working

_____ (d) I am looking for a job (or am on lay-off)

_____ (e) I am in a job training program

_____ (f) I am in a G.E.D. program

_____ (g) Don't feel I would fit in now in school (feel I'm an adult)

_____ (h) I'd be too far behind other students of my age

_____ (i) Other students or teachers would make fun of me

_____ (j) Don't feel I could do the work

_____ (k) I have lost interest in school

_____ (l) My friends have dropped out

_____ (m) My friends have graduated

_____ (n) Illness

(Other) _____

1. Were you aware that there is an adult education program? No____ Yes____

   (If so): Did you apply for enrollment? No____ Yes____

2. What services or courses could the schools have provided which would have kept you in school?

   _____

   _____

3. What services or courses could the schools now offer which would bring you back?

   _____

   _____

(THIS SECTION PERTAINS TO "PREGNANCY" OR "FATHERHOOD" DROPOUTS ONLY)

PROMPT: I have just a few more questions to ask regarding some services which could be of help to you.

G. Miscellaneous Information

(P) or (F) No____ Yes____ 1. Were you aware that you did not have to drop out of school because of pregnancy or fatherhood?

(P) or (F) No____ Yes____ 2. Have you been advised of legal and social services available such as Friend of the Court, ADC, etc.?

(P) or (F) No____ Yes____ 3. Had you taken any classes in school which included personal health management or sex education prior to leaving?

(P) No____ Yes____ 4. Would you return to regular school if you had available a free child care facility?

(P) No____ Yes____ 5. Were you aware that there are other school programs with free child care which are available to you?

(P) No____ Yes____ 6. Would you be interested in enrolling in such a program?

(P) 0___ 1___ 2+___ 7. How many children do you have?

* * * * *

To be completed by interviewer:

1. Was a parent (or guardian) present? No____ Yes____

2. Did parent participate in the interview? No____ Yes____

NOTE: Conclude interview with statement of appreciation.

_____

Interviewer